

Frequently Asked Questions – Superior National Forest

Does my canoe have to be licensed to be used in Minnesota?

Yes, all watercraft used in the state of Minnesota are required to be licensed. If your watercraft is already licensed in another state, that is also acceptable. You can find more information and where to purchase a license at:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/watercraft/index.html>,

or by calling 1-888-646-6367

How much is a fishing license and where can I get one?

The cost of a license may change from year to year and depends on whether you're a Minnesota resident or a non- resident. You can find current information at:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/fishing/index.html?type=fishing>

or by calling 1-888-646-6367

The State of Minnesota also offers an “instant license” by calling 1-888-665-4236. There is an additional charge for this service.

What should I do with my fish “guts?”

Bury or scatter fish remains well away from campsites, trails, portages and shorelines. STATE LAW PROHIBITS PUTTING FISH REMAINS INTO WATERS, LAKES, STREAMS OR RIVERS.

If I fish U.S./Canadian border waters, how many fish can I have in possession?

You can find this information in the Minnesota Fishing Regulations and online at <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/>. Go to “fish & wildlife”, and then go to “Fishing in Ontario”. Canadian permits are required in border waters if fishing on the Canadian side. For more information visit: <http://ontarioparks.com/>

What are the hunting and fishing regulations on the Superior National Forest?

Minnesota state hunting and fishing regulations apply on Superior National Forest lands. Hunting is allowed on all Superior National Forest lands, including the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), except within the limits of

developed recreation sites such as campgrounds and boating sites. Hunting on private land within the national forest boundary is allowed only if you have permission from the owner of the property. Use a detailed map or plat to determine ownership. Find more information at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/index.html>

Where can I find information about traveling in Canada?

A couple of good web sites are: <http://ontarioparks.com/> and <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/>. You can contact Canadian Immigration at: www.cic.gc.ca or 1-807-274-3815 Canadian Customs at: www.dhs.gov or 1-807-274-3655

How many people are allowed on a site in your campgrounds?

Nine people are allowed at one time at a typical campsite. If your group is larger you will need to split the group up and use several sites, or use a group camping site. This rule applies to backcountry & BWCAW campsites as well.

Do you have any special camping areas for large groups?

Yes, group campsites are available at the following Superior National Forest campgrounds: Echo Lake, Whiteface Reservoir, Fall Lake, Crescent Lake and Fenske Lake.

How many people can share a campsite in the BWCAW?

The maximum group size for travel or camping in the BWCAW is 9 people.

How many nights can I camp at one campsite before I have to move?

You can camp at the same campsite for fourteen consecutive nights, and only 30 consecutive total days within the Forest boundary on national forest lands. You must leave the campsite (Forest boundary) for at least one night before returning.

How do I make a reservation for campgrounds or BWCAW?

You can go online at: www.recreation.gov or for campgrounds call 1-877-444-6777 and for the BWCAW call 1-877-550-6777.

May I build a permanent shelter on Forest Service land in the Superior National Forest?

Permanent shelters are not allowed on Superior National Forest land, except under a special use permit. Contact the local district office regarding special use permits.

Are all canoe routes located in the BWCAW?

While there are many opportunities for canoeing inside the BWCAW there also are 13 excellent routes outside of the wilderness. For more information see:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/superior/recreation/canoeing.php>

Are there any BWCAW “backcountry” type sites outside of the wilderness area?

There are over 200 “backcountry” campsites on the Superior National Forest dispersed along rivers, lakes, and trails outside of the BWCAW. While many are accessible by water only, others can be reached on foot or by vehicle. Read about them at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/superior/recreation/camping/back_camp.php

Do I need a permit to enter the BWCAW just for the day and in the winter months?

Yes, you always need a permit when traveling in the BWCAW. Self-issued permits are required year-round for all non-motorized day use visitors, for any motorized day use into Little Vermilion Lake, and for all overnight visitors entering the BWCAW between October 1 and April 30. Any group taking an overnight paddle, motor, or hiking trip, or a motorized day-use trip into the BWCAW from May 1 through September 30 is required to obtain a quota permit. You can find more information at www.recreation.gov and at

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/superior/bwcaw/>.

How do I know which entry point to use when entering the BWCAW?

In choosing an entry point consider ability, length of time, how long are the portages, big vs. small lake, etc...

A good place to start when planning a trip to the BWCAW is with the “Trip Planning Guide” found on the Superior National Forest website:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/superior/bwcaw/>. From May through September

there is a quota (maximum number) of parties permitted to enter each entry point on a given date.

How many miles can I paddle in one day?

Every person paddles at a different rate depending on weather conditions, capability of paddlers, number of portages, and the starting/quitting time. Know your abilities. Use your own discretion on how far you can paddle in one day. Remember to consider time to find a campsite. A very general “rule of thumb”: in good weather conditions most reasonably fit people can paddle about 3 miles per hour before their muscles start to complain. The important thing is to be prepared for your trip to avoid an unpleasant experience or unnecessary search and rescue.

How long is a rod?

A rod is 16 ½ feet, approximately a canoe length. There are 320 rods in a mile.

Are portages marked in the BWCAW?

No, you’ll only see signs in the areas where motor routes become “paddle only” routes or where there is more than one portage in close proximity. Finding your own way is part of the wilderness experience. Be sure to bring a map and compass and know how to use them.

Who should I contact regarding the mechanized portages and their rates?

Prairie Portage – Kawishiwi Ranger District 218-365-7600

Trout Lake Portage – Loon Falls Portage (Little Vermilion to Lac LaCroix) –
LaCroix Ranger District- 218-666-0020

The district office will be able to direct you to the business running the portage.

Is it permissible to store a motor, boat or other equipment in the BWCAW?

Boats may be stored only for the duration of a current trip while in the BWCAW. Motors must be stored on a motor route. They may not be carried to or stored in a non-motor area. Any storage is at the risk of the owner. Please be careful not to damage any vegetation in the process.

Can I carry my motor through a paddle area in the BWCAW?

No, it is illegal to possess a motor in a non-motor area (even if it is not on the back of the boat).

Are horses allowed in the BWCAW?

Yes, but **NOT** on any designated trails or portages.

Are horses allowed in the Superior National Forest and are there any trails designated for horses?

Horses are allowed, but there are no designated trails. Please try to contain wastes and feed- particularly hay and grains that could contain exotic or invasive plant seed that could germinate and spread. Contact the District office in your area of interest for more information.

Can I use my fish finder in the BWCAW?

You may use a fish finder in the BWCAW.

Can I scuba Dive in the BWCAW and other areas of the Superior National Forest?

Yes, you may Scuba dive in both the BWCAW and other areas of the Superior National Forest. Please leave what you find so others can enjoy also.

Can I take a dog into the BWCAW and other areas of the Superior National Forest?

You may take a dog into the BWCAW and other areas on the Superior National Forest, but respect the rights of others. Keep your dog on a leash while on portages and prevent excessive barking. Dispose of fecal matter in a latrine or at least 150 feet from any water source, campsites, portages and trails.

Do cell phones and radios work in the BWCAW?

Cell phone and radio coverage is very limited on the Superior National Forest including the BWCAW. Be prepared for emergencies and do not expect to rely on radio or phone coverage.

How do I find out if there are any campfire restrictions in the BWCAW or other parts of the Superior National Forest?

Information regarding current restrictions is posted on the Forest website: www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior and available at any Forest Service office or BWCAW permitting station.

Where may I take my off-road vehicle in the Forest?

All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) and other off-road vehicles are allowed on forest roads and trails designated for that use. Visit our website http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/superior/recreation/atv_trails/ or Forest Service offices for a map displaying roads and trails where ATV use is allowed.

What should I do about drinking water?

Drinking water is available at most campgrounds and is routinely tested. Where a designated drinking water source is not provided (such as inside the BWCAW), the water should always be treated either by filtration, chemical means (such as purification tablets, filtering or iodine) or by boiling vigorously for 5 minutes to kill parasitic organisms then allowed to cool.

Where can I obtain maps?

You can purchase Fisher maps, and Superior National Forest maps at most of the District Ranger Offices. Our Duluth office and Laurentian Ranger District do not sell Fisher maps. Superior National Forest maps are available online at <http://www.nationalforeststore.com/> or by calling 218-626-4300.

Many area outfitters, bait stores, and local outdoor stores sell Fisher maps and McKenzie maps as well as USGS topographic maps.

Fisher maps can also be ordered online at: www.wafishermn.com or by contacting W.A. Fisher Co. at 1-218-741-9544.

McKenzie maps are available online at: www.mckenziemaps.com or by calling 1-800-749-2113.

Who decides when to put on the fire restrictions and at what level and how much rain has to fall before they lift the fire restriction?

The level of restriction to be implemented is determined by Forest fire experts and resource managers and based on a combination of factors including weather patterns, fuel conditions, and level of wildfire activity. Restrictions may apply only to a specific area such as the “blowdown area” in the BWCAW or may apply to other portions of or even the entire Forest depending on the evaluation of these factors across the Forest.

Can I bring firewood to the Superior National Forest?

To help prevent the spread of harmful insect species such as the Emerald Ash Borer and Gypsy Moth, both of which can kill trees, firewood used at Superior National Forest facilities must be from within the state of Minnesota or from a source approved by the Minnesota DNR. Visit:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/firewood/index.html> or <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/superior/NNIS.php> for more information.

Is firewood available on the Superior National Forest?

Firewood for campfires may be taken from dead and downed trees in the surrounding forest. For home use only (not to resell), you can purchase a firewood permit at any of the District Ranger offices; the cost is \$20.00 for the amount of 2 CCF's which is about 2 cords. A standard cord is 4'x4'x8'. The office where you purchase the permit will direct you as to where to gather this wood.

Is geocaching allowed in the Superior National Forest and the BWCAW?

Geocaching is allowed in the Superior National Forest with the exception of the Tofte Ranger District and the entire BWCAW; in these two areas you can only use virtual geocaching. Contact the district office that manages the area which you plan to visit for more information.

Where can I go mountain biking on the Superior National Forest?

The Big Aspen Trail on the Laurentian Ranger District is a multi-use trail co-designated for biking. You may also ride on any minimally-maintained Forest road. Contact the District office in your area of interest for more information.

How can I protect myself against biting insects?

Mosquitoes, ticks and black flies may be present at most times during the camping season. They are at their worst in late May through June and tend to decrease gradually in number as the summer progresses. Dressing properly provides the best protection. Wear long sleeved shirts and tuck your pant legs inside your socks or boot tops to protect your ankles. A hat provides excellent protection from deer and horse flies, which occur later in the season. Wear light colored clothing to better see insects on you and avoid dark colors, especially in the blue and green range, as they tend to attract insects more than any other colors. Insect repellents are also very useful and screened tents are essential for restful sleep during the mosquito season.

Lyme disease is an illness which if not diagnosed and treated promptly can cause serious problems involving the heart, joints, eyes, and nervous system. In Wisconsin, Minnesota, and eastern coastal states, this bacterial disease is transmitted to people and animals by the bite of the deer tick. To prevent this disease, conduct thorough tick checks on yourself, your children, and your pets after spending time outdoors. Walk in the center of trails to avoid brushing up against vegetation and also follow the above protection tactics.

How can I avoid problems with bears and other animals?

Animals are attracted to campsites by the smell of food and garbage. Therefore, it is important to keep your campsite as clean and odor free as possible. In campgrounds, store your coolers in the vehicle. In “backcountry” and BWCAW campsites keep foods tightly sealed and stored in plastic in a food pack. Using a rope, suspend the food pack from a tree branch making sure it is at least 8 to 10 feet from the ground and at least 6 feet out from the trunk. The tree should be well away from your tent. Keep a clean campsite. Never keep food in your tent and do not clean fish in the vicinity of your campsite. Bear resistant containers also work well; you can find one at some sporting good stores or outfitters. If bears do appear, don’t panic. Minnesota is home to one species - the Black Bear. These bear typically avoid confrontation with people and can usually be discouraged. Don’t be gentle, chase it away. Make loud noises, bang pans and yell. Do not, however, take any action that puts you at risk. Bears who are accustomed to getting food may be harder to discourage, but they will leave if you are more persistent than they are. Letting a bear get your food is not just your problem. By doing this,

you've helped train a bear to harass all campers that come after you. Remember, since problem animals often must be disposed of, a fed bear is a dead bear. Sadly "problem" bears are often destroyed if they continue to threaten people.

When do lakes "ice up" and when do they clear in the spring?

Ice may begin to form on lakes anytime after November 1 but it takes weeks until it is thick enough to be safe for travel. Lakes generally thaw (open up) around the end of April. Of course we cannot predict the weather; these dates are an approximation. Always be cautious about travel on ice.

When do the leaves turn color?

The colors begin to show by mid-September and usually peak near the end of September to early October. Updates about status of fall colors are usually posted during the season on our website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior/>

What is the weather like on the Superior National Forest? How about rain or snow?

Lake Superior influences the climate of nearby land on the east side of the Forest by moderating temperatures and, increasing precipitation. Weather on the western part of the Forest is influenced by continental climate. Across the Forest, rainfall ranges from 26 to 31 inches and average snowfall is approximately 60 inches. Temperatures range from -50 F* at the coldest in the winter to 98 F * maximum in the summer, even in the warmest part of the summer, night time the temperature can dip into the 40's or even 30's. Historic weather records for the Forest are available in the "Current Conditions" section of our web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior/>

Who can I contact for more information about the Superior National Forest and the surrounding areas?

Answers to your question may be on the website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/superior/> . You may also contact the following offices:

Superior National Forest Headquarters 8901 Grand Ave. Place Duluth, MN 55808	Kawishiwi Ranger District 1393 Highway 169 Ely, MN 55731 (218) 365-7600
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(218) 626-4300	
Gunflint Ranger District 2020 West Highway 61 Grand Marais, MN 55604 (218) 387-1750	LaCroix Ranger District 320 North Highway 53 Cook, MN 55723 (218) 666-0020
Isabella Work Station 3989 Forest Service Drive Isabella, MN 55607 (218) 323-7722	Laurentian Ranger District 318 Forestry Road Aurora, MN 55705 (218) 229-8800
Tofte Ranger District 7355 West Highway 61 PO Box 2159 Tofte, MN 55615 (218) 663-8060	

Who shall I contact in the case of an emergency?

In emergencies, dial **911** or contact the nearest county sheriff or Forest Service Ranger Station.

Cook County Sheriff	Grand Marais, MN	218- 387-3030
Lake County Sheriff	Ely, MN	218- 365-4211
	Two Harbors, MN	218- 834-8385
	Fall Lake area	888-450-8832
St. Louis County Sheriff	Duluth, MN	218- 727-8770 dispatch 218-336-4366
	Ely, MN	218- 365-3344
	Virginia, MN	218- 749-7134